

# STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AS THE DRIVER OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*Every organization exists to achieve clearly defined objectives. As a result of this fact, contemporary business environment is making compelling demand on organizations (public and private) to imbibe the culture of adopting strategic human resources management principles to help in achieving organizational goals. Strategic human resources management involves the process of formulating, implementing and evaluating strategies set out by an organization for maintaining effective human resources team. Strategic human resources management remains the process of ensuring that an organization has adequate manpower to carry out the various functions that would enable an organization to remain competitive. Other authors view strategic human resources management as set of decisions and actions taken in formulating and implementing strategies designed to achieve the human resources objectives of an organization. Descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. Questionnaire carefully designed and developed by the researcher was used to gather primary data for the study. Secondary data were obtained from reports and publications from the public and private sector organizations used as case study. The data gathered were analyzed using tables and percentages. The formulated hypothesis of the study was tested using chi-square inferential statistical tool. It was found that, in both public and private sector organizations, strategic human resources management remains the driver of organizational goal achievement.*

**Key words:** *Human Resources, Organizational goal, Driver, Achievement*

## INTRODUCTION

This research study is based on the impact of strategic human resources management and its position as the driver of organizational goal achievement. General human resources practices in both public sector establishments and private sector corporate organizations were reviewed. Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and United Bank for Africa were used as the focus of the study.

It has been widely acclaimed in the study of human resources management that human beings are the most important asset in an organization. Human resources is encapsulated in the following quotation: “Your most precious possession is not the material assets but human beings and what they carry in their heads and limbs that form their ability to achieve results” (Barney, 1991). It is therefore essential to give due care and attention to the development and management of human resources to enable an organization to achieve its goals and objectives.

Strategic human resources management is receiving increasing attention by researchers, authors, public sector establishments and corporate organizations in recent times. Policy makers believe that human resources is a key contributor to the functional growth of a firm through improved performance, increased productivity and economic growth of a nation in general (Grant, 2002) Productivity is the measure of the efficiency of the labour force. To keep the workforce efficient and performing, the human beings must be adequately trained, developed and managed. Higher labour productivity directly sheds into increased organizational profitability.

The success or failure of any modern organization is dependent on the function of the human resources management system. This is sometimes referred to as the process of coordinating work activities so that they are completed efficiently and effectively through human effort (David, 1999).

Human resources management is the process of setting and accomplishing goals through the use of qualified and capable human beings assisted by technical and financial resources within the context of environmental variables. In addition, human resources management is the process of sharing goals and values, structure, systems, staff, skills, styles and succession. Human resources management is essentially driven by the top management of an organization.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Definition of Human Resources Management**

Management authorities have defined Human Resources Management from various perspectives.

Some of the perspectives are discussed below:

1. Human Resources Management is that function which involves all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organization and its employees (Biles, 1980).
2. Human Resources Management is a range of policies, institutions, and procedures which enables the principles of industrial psychology to be put into practice (Graham, 1988).
3. Human Resources Management represents the activities of recruitment and employment, manpower planning, employee training and management development, organization planning, organization development, wages and salaries and services, union management relations and personnel research (Beach, 1980).
4. Human Resources Management involves a focus on:
  - (a) Treating employees as individuals, but at the same time, developing mechanism to integrate individuals into teams.
  - (b) The careful selection, training and development of the workforce.
  - (c) Reward system that stresses individual performance and commitment and which are linked to appraisal and development.
  - (d) The integration, not only of all personnel related policies and the development of employees as individual, but allowing for trade-union involvement as well.

Furthermore, from all the definitions above, human resources management (HRM) could be succinctly defined as: the management and processes of decision-making to bring the right people together as a team capable of identifying problems and ensuring that relevant resources are available on time, and are critically utilized to achieve desired objectives (Delery, 1996).

The decision thus far would suggest that without the right mix of human resources in an organization, no corporate strategy, however well formulated and implemented can achieve the

desired organizational goals. Managing human resources is complex and problematic. People as individuals or as members of a work group do not automatically embrace and take as their own the objectives of the organizations that employed them as workers. Individuals often have their own aspirations, expectations and objectives which they often seek to satisfy by working for a chosen organization.

Also, individuals bring their own perceptions, feelings and attitude into an organization and apply them in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities and in the handling of subordinates working under them. Invariably, these individual characteristics and objectives, which are known to influence employee's behavior at work, may conflict with the corporate objectives of the firm.

### **Objectives of Human Resources Management**

Some of the main objectives of Human Resources Management are discussed below:

- (i) **Societal Objective:** To be socially responsible to the needs and challenges of the society while maintaining the positive impact of such demands upon their organization. The failure of organizations to use their resources for society's benefit may result in restrictions. For example, societies may pass laws that limit human resources decisions.
- (ii) **Organizational Objective:** To recognize that Human Resources Management (HRM) exist to contribute to organizational effectiveness. HRM is not an end in itself, it is only a means to an end, that end being to assist the organization to achieve its primary objectives.
- (iii) **Functional Objective:** To maintain the department's contribution at a level appropriate to the organization's needs. Resources are wasted when HRM is more or less sophisticated than the organization it serves.
- (iv) **Personal Objective:** To assist employees in achieving their personal goals, at least in so far as these goals enhance the individual's contribution to the organization. Personal objectives of the employees must be met if workers are to be maintained,

retained and motivated. Otherwise, employees' performance and satisfaction may decline and employees may leave the organization. However, personal objectives must be subordinated to organizational goals and objectives.

### **Nature of Human Resources Management**

Human Resources Management is a process of bringing people and organizations together in a united endeavor to achieve the goals of the individual and that of the organization. The various features of HRM include the following:

- It is pervasive in nature as it is present in all enterprises
- Its focus is on results rather than on rules
- It tries to help employees develop their potentials fully
- It encourages employees to give their best to the organization
- It is all about people at work both as individuals and groups
- It tries to put people on assigned jobs in order to produce good results.
- It is a multi-disciplinary activity, utilizing knowledge and inputs drawn from psychology, economics, etc.

### **Contemporary Human Resources management Practices**

In order to develop a sound HRM system, the organization should have effective human resources management practices. HRM practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human beings and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the achievement of organizational goals (Schuler, 1984). Human Resources Management practices may differ from one organization to another and from one country to another.

## **The Concept of Strategy**

The meaning of the word “strategy” has been torn apart by many authors and scholars. Others have made the word a maid of all works. Today you hear of “strategic understanding” and “strategic refuse collection” which really has no meaning.

The word “strategy” is of military origin. It represents the art of war, especially the planning of movements of troops and ships into favourable position for battle.

Strategy, when applied to the business world, it means a solid action plan by an organization for dealing with internal and external forces in its business environment in order to achieve its goals and objectives. According to Mintzberg (1991), strategy represents five Ps – plans, ploys, patterns, position and perspective. He describes a plan as some sort of consciously intended course of action. In this situation, organizations are expected to decide what they want to do and how they intend to do it. Other applications of strategy in the business world are discussed below.

## **Corporate Strategy**

The scope of the firm in terms of the industries and markets in which it competes is usually defined by the corporate strategy. Strategy is for guiding a firm’s entry and exit from different businesses, for determining how a parent company adds value to and manages its portfolio of businesses and for creating value through diversification. Corporate strategy is essentially the task of domain selection.

## **Business Strategy**

Business Strategy is concerned with how the firm competes within a particular industry or Market, that is, the way a firm goes about achieving its objectives within a particular business.

This strategy may encompass such things as how an organization competes with its major competitors, how to meet the needs of customers, and how produce a quality product. Therefore, business strategy focuses on achieving a firm's objectives within a particular business line. Business strategy is the task of domain navigation.

### **Functional Strategy**

Functional strategy is concerned with the elaboration and implementation of the strategies through individual functions such as production, research and development, marketing, human resources management and finance. Failure of many organizations in recent times has been attributed to poor planning.

Strategy is not a detailed plan or program of instructions; it is a unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the actions and decisions of an individual or an organization.

Strategy is the determination of the basic term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of course of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out those goals (Chandler, 1982). In Chandler's definition of strategy, he attempts to view that strategy is about defining goals and objectives as it is about providing the means for achieving them.

Strategy is about positioning an organization for sustainable competitive advantages. It involves making choices about which industries to participate in, what products and services to offer, and how to allocate corporate resources to achieve such a sustainable advantage.

Strategy is important because there is proven link between a company's strategic choices and its long-term performance. Strategy is the pattern of objectives, purposes, or goals and the major policies and plans for achieving these goals, stated in such a way as to define what business the company is into now or intends to enter in the future and the kind of company it intends to be (Andrews, 1971).

Strategy is the overall plan for deploying resources to establish a favourable position. A strategy is the pattern or plan that integrates an organization's major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole. A well-formulated strategy helps to marshal and allocate an organization's resources into a unique and viable posture based upon its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment, and contingent moves to contain opponents or competitors (Homewood & Irwin, 1980).

Strategy and market positions are necessary to set directions for a firm and to outsmart competitors or at least enable it to overcome threatening environment. A good strategy when adequately implemented can ensure a topmost position for the weakest firm among other superior competitors, but without good strategies. Strategy is needed to focus effort and promote coordination of activities. Without strategy, an organization becomes bunch of individuals, hence strategy is required to ensure collective actions and concentration of efforts toward achieving organizational plans and objectives.

Strategy refers to a plan which a firm has devised to survive competitors. It is a winning plan or a plan for survival. It refers to a game plan for survival. Strategy is a ploy that is a subset of a plan, and is a strategy in the sense of strategies (i.e. a ruse or trick designed to put a rival company off by disguising the real intention of the company). Strategy provides consistency and stability. It deals with irregularity in behavior and reduces uncertainty about the operation of an organization. It resists changes thereby ensuring consistency which gives a sense of being in control to the management and relief from the anxiety created by complexity. This does not mean a static or stationary situation but rather it implies an efficient response to the environment to ensure stability and continual market leadership by the business organization involved.



## **Strategy Formulation**

Strategy formulation is the process of developing a strategy. It means deciding what to do. Strategy results from rational and methodical planning processes based on analyses of both internal resources and capabilities and the external environment. After formulating the plan, they pass orders down to the tactical management level. These people deal with shorter term goals intended to bring about the outcome dictated from above. In other words, decisions at the tactical level aim to implement the goals determined at the strategic level. Their time frame may be measured in months. They look at how to implement the broad plan passed down from their bosses in strategic management.

Strategy can be looked at as the process of establishing a company's mission, conducting research to determine internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. It also includes performing analyses that match key internal and external factors and establishing company objectives and strategies i.e. creating or determining strategies for an organization.

## **Approach to Strategy Formulation**

A distinction can be drawn between the traditional approaches to strategy formulation which was developed during World War I and II periods and the modern approach which evolved from the mid 1950s.

Traditional approach comprises the following:

- The sizing up of the company's situation generally, including the functional departments.
- The determination of objectives
- The development of a program of action covering the various activities of the company in the light of the direction and unity of purpose provided by the objectives.

The modern approach involves four processes

- Re-appraisal of the existing strategy in the light of changing external conditions.

- Constant surveillance of the environment to identify and capitalize on longer opportunities.
- Formulation of alternatives
- Choosing an appropriate strategy within a formulated system

### **Different Strategy Formulation Approaches**

1. Intuition Approach: Under this approach, the strategy evolves in the mind of the chief executive without being explicitly stated and without the aid of formal procedures.
2. Disjointed Incremental Approach: This is sometimes referred to as “muddling through.”  
  
This approach of strategy-making reflects the attitude of management having strong preference for acting only when forced to and also considering a few convenient alternatives involving only small and non-disruptive changes in the organization .
3. Entrepreneurial Approach: This approach is related to the role of a manager as an entrepreneur and equally depicted as a systematic risk-maker and risk taker who is always looking for and finding opportunities.
4. Inside-out Planning Approach: A basic approach to developing strategies could be inside out planning. Strategies ought to be first conceived in a thorough process arising out of the unique talents and resources available to the enterprise. Market forecasts should be considered later as a kind of check or constraint on strategies conceived.
5. The Key Factor Approach: This approach consists of the determination of the actual significant factors that are of importance to the process of a particular business on which major decisions are based.

## **Strategy Implementation**

Several research studies state that implementation incorporates a number of aspects, some of which can be changed directly and some of which can only be changed indirectly. Let us say, that the major implementation themes concern organization structure, strategies, planning system, policies, control system, and environmental conditions.

Strategic implementation is the mobilizing of employees and managers to put formulated strategies into actions. (i.e. how the firm goes about doing things). Strategy implementation is operational-oriented because goals and policies must be established and resources allocated throughout the organization. Successful strategy implementation requires the following types of changes, viz: setting performance standards, reallocation of resources to departments, installing information systems, establishing new sales territories, training new employees and managers, motivating individuals, obtaining new capital, developing new advertising strategies, segmenting new markets, and developing budgets and programs.

Strategic implementation depends on the overall condition and setting of the organization. It depends on the nature of the strategy and the amount of strategic changes involved including the manager's own skill, style and methods.

Oghojarfor (1988), identified four broad areas which represent the core tasks of strategy implementation. These areas are:

1. Performing and securing administrative task associated with strategy implementation.
2. Creating "fits" between strategy and the various internal "ways of doing things" in order to align the whole organization behind strategy accomplishment.
3. Figuring out an agenda and a set of action priorities that match up well with the organization's overall situation and context of the setting in which implementation must take place.

4. Deciding what managerial and leadership style to adopt inducing the needed organizational changes.

It would suggest that to be effective in strategy implementation, organizations should meet the following criteria:

- Clear responsibility for the successful outcome of planned strategic change should be allocated.
- The number of strategies and availability being pursued at any time should be limited.
- The ability of the necessary resources to cope with the changes should be seen as a key determinant of strategy and should not be overlooked.
- Necessary action to implement strategies should be identified and planned and again responsibility should be allocated, and
- Strategy evaluation or performance measures should be established and appropriate monitoring and control mechanisms put in place.

### **Strategy Evaluation**

Strategy evaluation simply means an appraisal of how well an organization has performed. This can be determined by answering the following questions: Have the firm's assets increased? Has there been an increase in profitability? Have sales increased? Has productivity level increased?

The essence of strategy evaluation is to test the effectiveness of strategies in achieving formulated organizational objectives. Through strategic and operational controls, strategists set standards, measure performance, evaluate the strategy and then initiate corrective action. The end-result of evaluation is the adjustment of strategies, reformulation of objectives or adaptation of plans.

## **Strategic Human Resources Management in a Corporate Organization**

Attracting and keeping the talented and skilled employees is one of the most important challenges organizations face in today's dynamic business world. No strategy, no matter how well-designed, will work unless you have the right people, with the right skills and behavior, in the right roles, motivated in the right way and supported by the right leaders. Companies can develop a competitive advantage through the skills and competencies of its people. So in order to be successful, more value must be given to people.

The job does not stop with attracting talented and skilled employees. In order to maintain this competitive advantage, an organization has to work structurally on the development of employee competencies and behavior in order to increase the performance of the organization. The Nigerian Ports Authority strategic human resources management focuses on the optimal design and implementation of human resources functions within the organization and the transformation into strategic function.

## **Strategic Human Resources Management in the Public Sector**

It has been established that human resources management in the public sector is a major influence in public sector change. The bureaucratic and the management models of public sector operation and activity are compared to discern the ways in which employment and organizational issues are conceptualized in each model. The manner in which the institutional policy and organizational change impact public sector employment is an important area to study.

While changes to the public sector over the past two decades have had a significant impact on employees of public sector organization and the conditions under which people work, there has been scanty attention paid to the specific field of human resources management research and academic inquiry in relation to the public sector. Moreover, contemporary human resources

management texts disregard acknowledgement of human resources management within the public sector. They rely instead on appropriating a business model of firms as the general context for human resources management scholarship.

Public sector HRM has been characterized by the creation of more flexible structures and processes, the removal of highly centralized agencies and service-wide consistency of rules and greater responsibility accorded to line managers and supervisors in the management of employees through flatter management structures and programmes of decentralization and devolution (Gardner and Palmer 1997).

At the job level, broader and multi-skilled jobs were introduced. There was also a greater concentration on performance and output measures. The new models of HRM in the public sector introduced the notion of human resources having the capacity to achieve performance outcomes in line with the strategic direction of the public sector organization (Gardner and Palmer 1997). With this orientation, there was an emphasis on securing and retaining staff who could achieve desired outcomes and, along with this focus, a dismantling of the internal labour market and little or no commitment to maintaining job security. The human resource system relied on performance management for workforce flexibility and productivity.

The new system however, has been criticized for the resultant erosion of employment conditions and opportunities for career development. Large-scale downsizing and contracting out has also arguably contributed to poorer quality of service delivery. With the major changes and reforms to the public sector, there has been a dilution of some of the practices and conditions that have traditionally set the public sector apart from other organizations in the private and non-profit sectors. The consequences of adopting new public sector management practices and principles was argued to have meant a cutting back of employees' benefits and wages, staff reductions and changes in organizational culture and structure (Black and Upchurch 1999).

It is also clear that the reforms have driven changes in the way the public sector interacts with, and shapes relations with external organizations. The policy of competitive tendering for jobs has delivered new models of market-based service delivery in the public sector. Furthermore, Accordingly, the changing nature of government delivery of services has altered the nature of relations between the public sector and other sectors, particularly the community sector. Greater competition between service delivery organizations and contracting out have pressured community sector organizations to respond to broader types of service delivery under conditions of competitive tendering or through contractual arrangements that specify more closely the way the human resources are deployed to deliver services. This has meant greater expectations on the part of government funding bodies in relation to community organizations for ensuring better service delivery.

The changing dimensions of public sector employment indicate that HRM has had a major impact on the operation of the public sector. The contribution of human resource management to understanding the constituent elements of the new public sector is significant. New public sector management has a place on centre stage in terms of affecting the agenda for change.

Emerging new concerns in relation to new directions and approaches for HRM in the public sector centre on the organizational effects of ever-increasing levels of technology, changes in population patterns affecting labour markets and new demands on management leadership. Areas of emerging concern and challenge to HRM in the public sector are the advances being made possible by highly sophisticated information technology including human resource information systems, the importance of understanding the implications of demographic trends such as the ageing population, the need for additional attention to leadership and leadership development and the greater emphasis on workforce capability and systems of knowledge management (Shim 2001).

The different orientation of the public sector from the for-profit, private sector means that, while HRM has commonalities across all sectors in its attention to workforce issues, HRM in the public sector will exhibit a range of differences to that of private sector HRM.

### **Strategic Human Resources Planning**

Strategic human resources planning can be defined as a long-term plan for the recruitment, selection and placement of adequately qualified, skillful and experienced human resources in an organization. In other words, it is the maintenance of that caliber of human beings that will enable an organization to remain competitive and able to achieve its set goals and objectives.

On the other hand, strategic planning generally is the formal consideration of an organization's future course of action. All strategic planning deals with, at least, one of the under-listed three key questions:

1. What do we do?
2. For whom do we do it?
3. How do we excel

In many organizations this is viewed as a process for determining where an organization is going over the next year or more, typically three to five years ahead, although some extend their vision up to 20 years. In order to determine where it is going, the organization needs to know exactly where it stands at present and then determine where it wants to be in future and how it will get there. The resulting document is called the "strategic plan."

It is also true that strategic planning may be a tool for effectively plotting the direction of a company. However, strategic planning itself cannot foretell exactly how the market will evolve and what issues will surface in the coming days in order to plan the organizational strategy. Therefore, strategic innovation and tinkering with the strategic plan have to be a cornerstone strategy for an organization to survive the turbulent business climate.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. Questionnaire was used to gather primary data for the study. Two organizations were used as case study to accomplish the research study. One organization was chosen from the public sector (Nigerian Ports Authority) and the other from the private sector (United Bank for Africa). A sample size of 50 employees (25 from each organization) was obtained through simple random sampling for the study. Secondary data were obtained from reports and publications from the two organizations. The data gathered were analyzed using tables and percentages. The formulated hypothesis of the study was tested using chi-square inferential statistical tool. The hypothesis was stated in null form as follows:

“Strategic human resources management does not serve as the Driver of organizational goal achievement.”

The main purpose was to establish the common place of strategic human resources management in the goal achievement of an organization be it a public sector establishment or a private sector corporate entity. The eventual result showed that organizational goal achievement is largely driven by strategic human resources management.

**Ho: Strategic human resources management does not serve as the driver of organizational goal achievement.”**

**Table 1**

**Below shows the responses of the 50 executives on the research questionnaire**

<b>Response Variables</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
YES	45	80%
NO	5	20%
Undecided	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	

**Table 2 (Chi-square testing )**

**The hypothesis is tested below with the questionnaire data provided above**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Fo</b>	<b>Fe</b>	<b>(Fo - Fe)</b>	<b>(Fo - Fe)<sup>2</sup></b>	<b><math>\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}</math></b>
Yes	45	16.7	28.3	800.89	47.96
No	5	16.7	-11.7	136.89	8.2
Undecided	0	16.7	-16.7	278.89	16.7
<b>Total</b>					<b>72.86</b>

$$Fe = 50/3 = 16.7$$

$$X^2 \text{ table value at 5\% level of significance} = 3.84$$

$$\text{Degree of Freedom} \quad 2 - 1 = 1$$

$$X^2 \text{ Table value} = 3.84$$

$$X^2 \text{ Calculated value} = 72.86$$

## **RESULT OF THE TESTED HYPOTHESIS**

In the chi-square test, it was found that, the calculated value of the chi-square (**X<sup>2</sup> cal 72.86**) exceeded the table value of the chi-square (**X<sup>2</sup> tab 3.84**). Thus, the Null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the Alternative hypothesis (Hi) was accepted. The result of the hypothesis tested provides evidence to show that **Strategic human resources management, to a large extent, serves as the driver of organizational goal achievement."**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Strategic Human Resources Management and Goal Achievement**

Organizational effectiveness which leads to organizational goal achievement can be looked at as the extent to which an organization, given adequate resources and means, can achieve its set

goals and objectives without placing undue strain on its members. Organizational effectiveness is the concept of how effective an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organization intends to achieve. The term organizational effectiveness is often used interchangeably with organizational success and organizational development. According to Silver and Sherman (1980), organizational effectiveness is the extent to which a firm's resources can be used to achieve growth and profit without destroying its internal resources.

However, Mondy et al (1990), defined organizational effectiveness as the degree to which an organization produces the intended output. As Daft (1991) rightly argued. Organizations pursue multiple goals, and such goals must be achieved in the face of competing limited resources, and disagreement among interest groups. Oguntimehin (2001) submitted that organizational effectiveness is the ability to produce desired results. The discussion of organizational effectiveness is very important because it is the effectiveness of an organization that produces goal achievement.

An effective organization has holistic and harmonious systems, cultures, processes and services that empower and support people to achieve organizational goals. For an organization to survive, it must adopt strategies to deal with their environments. Such strategies include competitive, bargaining, co-adaptation and coalition strategies. An organization's strategic management has its ultimate objective in the development of its corporate values, managerial capabilities, organizational responsibilities and operational decision making at all hierarchical levels and across all business and functional lines of authority. A sustainable competitive advantage is achieved only when competitors have failed in efforts to duplicate the benefits of firm's strategy. The underlying differences in organizational effectiveness resulted from the different views concerning the nature of organizations. The different views concerning the nature of organizations have implicitly or explicitly determined the conceptual definition of

organizational effectiveness.

The first view sees an organization as a rational set of arrangements and emphasis toward achieving certain goals defined effectiveness in terms of the goals attainment. Second, the open-system perspective of organizations defined effectiveness as the degree to which an organization can maintain all its components. According to Harrison (1996), strategic human resources management of an organization can help to increase the effectiveness as well as the flexibility of an organization.

The evolution of strategic human resources management philosophy reflects both changes in the nature of organizations and their external environment towards greater variability, and dynamic nature of competition and an increased sophistication of thought gained from theory of development and empirical investigation. Strategic human resources management is an advantage for every organization in order to use qualified and suitable workforce to achieve goals and objectives. To survive and thrive in the era of globalization of economic activities and liberalization of trade, an organization needs to be competitive. A competitive organization has to practice strategic human resources management in the organization and be adaptable to changes in the environment. In this regard, if strategic human resources management is useful as an approach in improving effectiveness of a firm, then a better understanding of the concept is of great value.

With better understanding of strategic human resources management in an organization, top management can formulate and implement effective strategies based on their strategic capabilities to improve their performance as well as to overcome problems and constraints.

Strategic management of both the workforce and production and service activities has recently become an imperative in both public and private sectors.

New management techniques like strategic management and total quality management have been

introduced, and changes to public accounting principles have made it easier to accommodate costing activities, benchmarking and market testing. Introduction of management techniques predominantly rooted in the private sector into a public sector, environment presents public sector managers with two major challenges. First, the long-term policy consistency required to accommodate the planning and implementation of the organizational changes is often triggered by the introduction of new management techniques and it is hard to obtain.

Organizations have therefore, increasingly placed effort in tasking temperature checks through staff satisfaction surveys, climate surveys, or employee engagement surveys. While producing interesting information about employee attitude or perception, very often, they are not diagnostic in nature to be a satisfactory proof. Basically, there are three major perspectives in the study of strategic human resources management effectiveness:

The first perspective is the use of goal-centred approach to assess human resources effectiveness. In this situation, individual organization seeks to analyze the extent of fulfillment of important planning objectives.

The second perspective concerns the ability to develop a generic capability. Generic capability required of every formal strategic planning system is the ability to encourage both creativity and control on the part of the labour force (Camillus, 1975). In this perspective, creativity and control are used here not as opposite objective but as requisite properties of an effective planning system.

The third perspective is traditional and examines the role and impact of corporate planning on organizational success. Although, the link may be a little bit difficult to establish however, there are strong arguments that the ultimate test of the system's effectiveness and success, and justification for its existence is the impact on organizational performance (Henry, 1979).

HRM practices enhance organizational performance. Rondeau and Wager (2001) examined the relationship between HRM practices, workplace climate and perceptions of organizational

performance, in a large sample of Canadian nursing homes and found that nursing homes, which had implemented more 'progressive' HRM practices and which reported a workplace climate that strongly valued employee participation, empowerment and accountability tended to be perceived to generally perform better on a number of valued organizational outcomes. Chand and Katou (2007) conducted a study to investigate whether some specific characteristics of hotels affect organizational performance in the hotel industry in India; and to investigate whether some HRM systems affect organizational performance. They found that hotel performance is positively associated with hotel category and type of hotel and hotel performance is positively related to the HRM systems of recruitment selection, manpower planning, job design, training and development, quality circle, and pay system.

In the study conducted by Nayaab et al., (2011), it was found that HRM practices contribute to the enhanced banks performance. Further, the result indicated that HRM practices like training, employee participation in decision making was found significantly related to the performance of banks. Further, Osman et al., (1988) found that the effectiveness of implementing HR practices in a company does indeed have a major impact towards a firm's performance. The findings also show that HR practices have an impact of nearly 50 percent on firm performance.

### **Strategic Human Resources Management Process**

Many research studies defined the strategic human resources management process in different ways, but the aim of the process is to build a market position strong enough and set up an organization capable enough to produce successful performance through the aid of adequately trained and effectively deployed personnel.

## **Environment and Resources**

Environment simply means surrounding, external object, influences or circumstances under which something exist. It is the totality of factors, which are external to the organization and capable of leading to the firm's opportunities and threats. In other words, environment has influence on workers, business and society. The environment has two parts, namely: the external and internal environment.

The analysis of the environment is a major stage of the strategic human resources management concerned with providing an understanding of the current situation that the organization faces. Let us say, the analysis of the environment, the impact of internal and external factors is assessed. These influences can play a major role in the development of strategies, as they help identify potential opportunities and threats to the organization. This model is an analysis of an environment of the four major angles that surround an organization – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Based on a stimulating and more creative problem-solving method, Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) under which an organization is operating is useful at the corporate, competitive and functional levels of strategy as it addresses the current fit between the organization and its environment and considers the potential impact of environmental changes (Thompson, 1993). This concept was popularized by Jack Welch of General Electric Company, U.S.A. in the 1980s.

According to Oghojafor (2007), the SWOT analysis is a commonly used planning tool, which assesses the firm's strategic profile in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Focusing on both internal and external environments, it serves to highlight a firm's distinctive competences which enable it to gain competitive advantage. SWOT has strong implication in both the profit and non-profit sectors (Goldsmith, 1997). However, there are difficulties in applying this model in the public organizations where a variety of programs and

initiatives operate from under one roof as opposed to single-purpose organizations (Goldsmith, 1997).

The capability and interesting fact about this model is that it represents an evaluation of how well the resources of an organization match the needs of the environment in which it operates and competes. It devised strategies alongside situational forces, such as the role and the influence of stakeholders, government policy, and market trends which may bring direct impact on the activities of the organization. At the same time, the evaluation of internal factors stresses the importance of management values which must be linked to the social obligations. This ultimately constitutes the intrinsic factor for the organization's existence. Therefore, for the purpose of this project, environmental analysis will focus on three parts: The immediate environment analysis, the internal environment analysis and external environment analysis.

#### Immediate Environment

The immediate competitive environment for company is its industry. In the industry, organizations need to examine their competitors and competitive forces that might be a direct or indirect influence on their products and services. The organization will get some ideas from the competitive environment at the industry level. In addition, the impact could best be understood by focusing on who the distinctive actors are and how they behave competitively. Let us say, the factors in the immediate environment of an organization might be concerned with the role of the government, competitors, business groups (industry), and multinational corporations.

The characteristics of the immediate environment model into two main groups – industry activities and the industry actors. The first examination concentrates on the big picture of the industry, with a focus on the size of the industry, characteristics of the industry, the stage in life cycle of the industry, future challenges to the industry, the market of the industry and competitive forces. Secondly, the examination concentrates on the industry actors, which are divided into two main groups – direct actors and indirect actors. The direct actors are the



participants who are heavily involved in the industry such as competitors, buyers, suppliers, substitutes and potential competitors. On the other hand, the indirect actors could possibly be the government, the general environmental factors and related business groups.

**Internal Environment: Strengths and Weaknesses**

- Does the organization have qualified and capable hands to help it to achieve its objectives?
- Does it have clear marketing objectives and strategy?
- Does the organization use information technology effectively in all aspects of its activities?
- Does its investments in R & D match or exceed that of competitors?
- Does the organization meet its financial objectives?
- To what extent does the firm have clear HRM objectives and strategies areas such as employee motivation, staff turnover and provision of training?

**External Environment: Opportunities and Threats**

- What are the main factors in the societal environment (political-legal, economic, socio-cultural and technological)?
- What is the market strength of competitors?
- What new products or services, including those of the firm and competitors, are in the pipelines?
- What is the level of consumer demand and can it be expected to remain stable?
- What is the likely threat of new entrants in the market for the firm's products?

**Benefits of Strategic Human Resources Management**

According to Ogbojafor (2007), strategic human resources management benefits to an organization include the following:

1. It allows an organization to initiate and influence rather than just respond and react to its environment.
2. It provides an objective basis for allocating resources.
3. It reduces internal conflicts that can arise when subjective factors form the basis of making major decisions.
4. It allows an organization to take advantage of key environmental opportunities, and to minimize the impact of external threats.
5. It enables an organization to capitalize on internal strengths and to overcome internal weaknesses.
6. Strategic management approach to decision-making generates synergy and spirit de corps among all managers and employees.
7. It also brings order and discipline throughout an organization.
8. It enables organizations to overcome declining revenues, declining profits or even bankruptcy.
9. It enhances awareness of environmental threats and improves understanding of competitor strategies.
10. It increases productivity, reduces resistance to change and brings about clearer understanding of performance and reward relationships.

Instead of measuring organizational effectiveness, the organization determines proxy measures

which will be used to represent effectiveness. Proxy measures used may include such things as number of people served, types and sizes of population, segments served, and the demand within those segments for the services the organization supplies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Various Functions of Human Resources Management**

Several attempts have been made from time to time by different researchers to identify the type of Human Resources Management (HRM) practices in different sectors. Pfeffer (1994) identified sixteen (16) practices which denote best practices. This was later refined to the following seven practices:

1. Employment Security
2. Selective Hiring
3. Self-Managed teams/Team Working
4. High compensation contingent on organizational performance
5. Extensive Training
6. Reduction in Status Difference
7. Sharing Information

In a study, Redman and Matthews (1998), identified an “HRM Bundle” of key practices which support service organizations quality strategies, these being:

- (i) Careful recruitment, selection and engagement, for example, total quality recruitment, zero defects recruitment, and right first time recruitment.
- (ii) Extensive remuneration systems, for example, bonuses available for staff willing to be multi-skilled.
- (iii) Team working and flexible job design, for example, encouraging a sense of cohesiveness and designing empowered jobs.

- (iv) Training and learning, for example, front line staff having enhanced interpersonal and social skills.
- (v) Employee involvement, for example, keeping employees informed of key changes in the organization.
- (vi) Performance appraisals with links to contingent reward systems, for example, gathering customer feedback to recognize the work by employees over and above their expected duties, which in turn, is likely to lead to a bonus for staff.

All these are very important but only three practices (recruitment, selection and engagement) will be discussed in detail in this research study

### **Recruitment, Selection and Engagement**

This is also known as staffing the organization staffing the organization. Recruitment is the process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in an organization. While Selection is identifying from those who came forward, the individuals most likely to fulfill the requirements of the organization and Engagement is offering appointment to those who successfully emerge in the entire process (Huselid, 1995).

#### **Recruitment:**

Recruitment is very important to know where suitable applicants are likely to be found, how best to make contact with them, and to secure their application. This involves a thorough knowledge of sources of labour and method of recruitment. The most appropriate means of attracting suitable applicants will depend upon the nature of the organization, the vacant position, and possibly the urgency of need. Recruitment process involves all sets of activities and attitudes needed to help an organization achieve its objectives.

Recruitment requires planning decisions and the strategy entails identifying the kind and number of required recruits, when they are needed, the required knowledge, skills and attitudes where to recruit and who to recruit and what the job recruitments will be. In a small organization, the owner-manager is usually solely responsible for recruiting of a staff into the organization. He might do so by utilizing informal methods, and where situation demands, he might outsource the task to a consultant agency. While in a big organization, recruitment is generally a shared responsibility but solely handled by Human Resources Department (Nayyab, 2011).

### **Sources of Recruitment**

There are two sources for potential employees: Internal recruitment and external recruitment.

- (i) Internal Recruitment: This is the recruitment made out of existing employees in the organization.
- (ii) External Recruitment: This is the pool of potential applicants outside the organization.

### **Methods of Recruitment**

Under-listed are various methods of Recruitment:

1. Internal Advertisement
2. Placing of vacancy list outside the premises
3. Advert in National press
4. Advert in Technical press
5. Placing advert in Job Centers and labour offices
6. Commercial employment agencies
7. Executive search consultants
8. Adverts placed in Schools or universities
9. Personal visit to potential employees

## **Shortlisting**

The ultimate objective of recruitment should be to produce a shortlist of candidates who are worth selecting. A good recruitment drive should provide you a degree of choice, to enable you match the information on the application forms against the person-specification. You would need to sort out the application into the three categories of “Probable”, “possible” and “unsuitable”.

Shortlist can then be made up from the first two categories, while the unsuitable applicants are politely declined. It is vital that you promptly and courteously notify unsuitable candidates. A sloppy attention to this aspect of the process has done nothing to enhance the reputation of the organization in general.

More so, once you know about the job requirement, and your recruitment drive has attracted job application, the most important thing to do is to select most suitable candidates (Poole, 1996).

## **Selection**

This is the process by which you choose from a list of applicants, the persons who best meet the criteria for the position available, considering current environmental context. The aim is to compare the demands of the job with the candidates’ capabilities and inclinations, by various techniques. The intent of such a process is to generate information from the applicants, that will predict their job success, and then to hire the candidate predicted to be most successful.

## **Methods of Selection**

In practice, selection is not that simple: The process is explained through illustration below:

“Interviews are commonly referred to as conversation with a purpose and they are used in almost all organizational entity. Interviews are useful for assessing personal characteristics such as

interpersonal skill, practices intelligence, social interaction and communication skills.

The interviews can also be used for answering applicants' selling the organization and for negotiating terms and conditions. It is a matter of some debate, whether the interview accurately assesses the ability at work, relevant experience and work skills. While the use of Curriculum Vitae (CV) or Resume provides information relevant for preliminary screening of candidates that are suitable for the post. Applicants who do not have the relevant training, experience, or who possess other desirable characteristics can easily be screened out at this point. Furthermore, the use of Test after the preliminary screening is designed to measure general intelligence and knowledge, aptitude for the work, skill levels, work motivation and personality. This use of Reference Checks is a traditional practice. It is however, a growing practice for organizations to design their specialized forms, which they send to referees to gather information about the applicant's past performance. Medical/physical examination can tell if an applicant has the physical and mental capabilities for a position (Osman, 1998).

### **Engagement**

Offering appointment to those who emerge successful in the entire process of selection is called engagement. By this, an employment letter is given to the employee stating the terms and conditions of the firm's remuneration package and other relevant information that will be useful to the employee and later the employee is finally inducted into the organization proper.

### **Human Resources Empowerment through Training and Development**

Human resources training and development are vital input in the management process, aimed at improving and enhancing the output of organization both quantitatively and qualitatively. Through systematic training and development, organization employees are equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities and attitudes relevant to the cost effective

performance or the job. Both training and development are integral part of the total framework for effective management.

The purpose of both training and development is similar. The main difference between the two lies in the levels of employees for whom they are meant, and the contents and techniques employed.

### **Training**

It tends to be a short term process, utilizing a systematic and organized procedure, by which employees (mostly non-managerial) acquire essential technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose. It refers to instructions in technical and mechanical operations, such as acquiring knowledge and skills of using computer package. It is often for a short period and for a specific job-related purpose.

### **Various Types of Training**

- **Induction:** To familiarize new recruits with job requirements and procedures, departmental objectives and performance standards; and the values and norms of the department.
- **Management Development:** To equip managers with the knowledge and skills required and to widen their perspective.
- **Vocational:** To provide staff with the professional or technical knowledge and skills required for work.
- **Language and communication:** To meet operational needs and to prepare for the future.
- **Computer:** To provide staff with basic computer skills

### **Development**



It is long term educational process, which utilizes a systematic and organized procedure, by which personnel (mostly managerial) acquire conceptual and theoretical knowledge. This refers not only to technical knowledge and skills operation, but also to philosophical and theoretical educational concepts. It involves broader education and its purpose is long-term development.

Training and development are necessary for all organizations particularly in today's world of fast changing technology, changing values and environment. Both training and development can therefore be thought of as a form of investment on human capital. Not only can both forms of intervention contribute to the organization's ability to achieve its objective, they can also transform the lives and prospects of the individuals who benefit from them.

There are two types of training, they are:

- (a) On-the-job method
- (b) Off-the-job method

On -the-job method of training is also two ways:

- (i) Work experience which denotes the movement of the individual from job to gain breath of experience. Examples are job relation, acting up, seconding, committee assignments, job enlargement and, enrichment and lastly, work relation.
- (ii) Practical training can be defined as any device used in training and development of employees other than formal courses. Examples are apprenticeship, coaching and demonstration, reviews and group discussion, special projects and task forces.

While off-the-job is a special one from the company, the location may be in a classroom, an outside organization set up by the organization, an organized workshop or an educational institution, which is not part of the company. The techniques employed by this method include;

conferences and workshops, seminars or term discussions, professional training correspondence courses, case studies and so on (Satow, 1994).

### **Compensation and Benefits to the Workforce**

This is a very important aspect of Human Resources Management (HRM) practices. It is the total package of wages and salaries, allowances and other fringes, like, housing allowance, dressing allowance, and furniture allowance and so on; this varies on organizations. Against the background of the devices for measuring and rewarding high productivity and the sections which are applied when performance falls below expectation (Onosedo Commission, 1982).

Good compensation and benefits package from the findings show that it boosts and enhances employees' performance, salaries and wages paid varies from organization to organization.

### **Factors Affecting Strategic HRM Practice**

HRM practices differ from one country to another and from one organization to another. The factors which affect the HRM practices include external and internal factors.

#### **(a) External Factors**

Kane and Palmer (1995) opine that external factors affecting HR practices are those pressures on firms that cannot be controlled and changed in a favourable way in the short run. These factors include the following:

**Economic Changes:** Satow & Wang (1994) found that as a result of development of the global economy, the international dimension of HR practices has become more and more significant.

The focus of HR practices has shifted from traditional topics such as internal selection and rewards to concepts such as globalization and international competition.

**Technological Changes:** Technology affects HRM to a greater extent because of high degree

of interaction between technology and HR. Technology changes the way we work, the roles we undertake and the interactions through which work gets done. (DeFilli, 2002).

Altman (2002), argued that technology facilitates the growth of a multinational enterprises but generates simultaneous problem of uncontrollable across a geographically dispersed workforce. Garavan et al. (2008), suggested that technology lies at the heart of manufacturing industry. It provides a series of business advantages. Technological developments alter the context of HR practices and the way they are implemented.

**National Culture:** Chandrakumara and Sparrow (2004) found that culture is of crucial importance in organizations' preferences in developing appropriate structure and methods for HR practices (Schuler, 1987).

**Industry/Sector Characteristics:** Organizations can be classified into manufacturing and service organizations for the purpose of analyzing the HRM practices. The idea behind this classification is the fact that different production processes necessitate different HR practices.

**Legislation/Regulations:** Legislations and regulations are frequently cited as having a direct impact on HR practices (Kane and Palmer, 1995). Every country has developed a set of regulations for the management of human resources, so, the HRM practices have to be designed or modified according to these regulations.

**Actions of Competitors:** There are many ways in which companies can gain a competitive edge or a lasting and sustained advantage over their competitors, among them being the development of comprehensive human resources practices (Jackson et al., 1989; Kane and Palmer, 1995; Poole and Jenkins, 1996; and Narsimha, 2000).

**Action of Unions:** Kochan et al., (1984). Opined that the presence or absence of unions in organizations is a salient variable known to be associated with some human resources.

**Globalization:** As a result of globalization, the whole world has become a single market, the companies have crossed the boundaries of their country of origin and opened their operations in other countries. This has created a challenge for the organization in terms of management of human resources. Some companies have tried to transfer the HRM practices from one country to another but it has been found that some practices can be transferred across nations almost without any change but some must be modified to become workable in another setting and some are more deeply culture-specific and may not always be transferable.

**(b) Internal Factors**

The internal environment of organizations strongly affects their HR practices. According to Milkovich and Boudreau, (1991), researchers have compiled a lengthy list of organizational characteristics related to HR practices. The important internal factors are as follows:

**Organizations Size:** According to McPherson, (2008), evidence suggests that there is a large number of small firms that do not institute formal HR practices. In large organizations, for each functional level, there may be the need for a different HR department (Jackson et al., 1989)

**Organizational Structure:** A firm's strategy and structure are important in determining HR practices flexibility and integration. There are important structural differences among firms that affect the way in which HR practices are designed and implemented (Garwin, 1986); Tomer, 1995; Hudson, et al., 2001)

**Business Strategy:** To gain competitive advantage, firms use different competitive strategies.

These strategies are more productive when they are systematically linked with human resources management practices. Companies can improve their environment by making efficient choices about human resources practices that consistently support their chosen strategy (Milkovich & Boundreau, 1991; Schuler, 1992).

**Human Resources Strategy:** HR strategy is an important determinant of both intensity and diversity of HR practices (Gravan et al., 2008). As a rule HR practices are shaped in accordance with HR strategy.

**History, Tradition and Past Practices:** A number of closely related factors, such as history, traditions and past practices tend to generate resistance to change in most organizations (Kane and Palmer, 1995; Pardo and Fuentes, 2003).

**Top Management:** The influence of top management on HR practices is acknowledged by most writers, even if only to the extent of advising that top managements support should be present (Ondrack and Nininger, 1984); Kane and Palmer, 1995) in designing and implementing HR policies.

**Line Management:** Line Management participation in designing and implementing HR activities is the key to organizational success. Since line managers are responsible for creating value, they should integrate HR practices in their work.

**Power and Politics:** Tsui and Milkovich (1987) found that organizational power and politics as exercised by various constituencies are crucial determinants of HR practices.

**Academic and Professional Influence on HR Practices:** HR staff are often involved in the decision making process about HR policies and practices. Their knowledge about alternative

HR practices may represent important variables in their own right (Kane and Palmer, 1995).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study of strategic human resources management and the formulation of strategies for organizational success can be organized around four major issues. They are firstly, what the organization wants to achieve in terms of staff strength, skills and productivity. Secondly, how the business should be positioned with the workforce on ground to achieve the best of results. Thirdly, the firm must have the ability to create capabilities for employees to enable them handle essential functions.

Strategic human resources management is very important for every organization, to grow and achieve its objectives. Organizations are established to achieve objectives, and for this objective to be achieved, the organization must use management team and the rest of the workforce to plan and to carry out this plan taking into consideration the varying factors, of the internal and external environment that exerts their influence on the organization. Strategic human resources management helps every organization to achieve its objectives, and enhance organizational success.

The main aim of strategic human resources management is to decide on organizational goals, the means of achieving these goals using adequately performing workforce and ensuring that the organization is strategically positioned to achieve its set goals and objectives. Furthermore, the strategies developed provide bases for managerial decision making. Strategic human resources management aims to ensure that the firm remains competitive and able to satisfy both customers' and shareholders' expectations. This way of thinking about strategic human resources management will go a long way in generating substantial benefits for an organization.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this research study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. The management of every organization should try to create a conducive environment that will enable strategic human resources management practices to flourish.
2. Every organization should try as much as possible to formulate clear mission and vision statement and deploy performing workforce to achieve the desired organizational goals.
3. The top level management should expatiate on how strategic human resources management aids organizational success to the lower level employees.
4. The entire workforce should be made to understand that strategic human resources management helps every organization to achieve its objectives, and enhance organizational effectiveness.
5. Organizations are established to achieve objectives and human factor is a strong agent for the achievement of objectives. For this reason, firms must use management team to plan through the process of strategizing to carry out this plan, taking into consideration the varying factors of the internal and external environment that exerts their influence on the organization.

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James Nwoye Obi was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1960 in Anambra State of Nigeria. After his primary and secondary education in Anambra State, he gained admission into Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria and successfully completed his B.Sc. degree in Business Administration in 1983.

After working for a few years, he returned to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for postgraduate studies and completed his M.B.A. degree in 1989. In the year 1997, he enrolled at the University of Lagos and obtained an Advanced Diploma in Human Resources Management.

It was time to look beyond the borders. With a burning ambition to do a doctoral degree programme, he left the country in January, 2001, to Germany and from there to the United States of America and came back to Nigeria in January, 2010 with a Ph.D. degree in Business Administration obtained in U.S.A.

Dr. Obi joined the National Open University of Nigeria in April, 2010 as a Course Coordinator. He is married with children among them is Miss Chinyere R. Obi of the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Lagos. Dr. Obi has academic publications in Corporate Social Responsibility, Leadership, Staff Training and Management Development, Mergers and Acquisitions, Strategic Planning and Decision-making.